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Summary Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repository:</th>
<th>M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections &amp; Archives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creator:</td>
<td>Semmler, Alexander, 1900-1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title:</td>
<td>Alexander Semmler Papers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID:</td>
<td>mss131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date [inclusive]:</td>
<td>1914-1977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Description:</td>
<td>10.5 cubic ft.</td>
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<td>Physical Location:</td>
<td>The materials are located onsite in the department.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language of the Material:</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language of the Material:</td>
<td>English, German, Spanish, Italian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abstract:</td>
<td>The Alexander Semmler Papers contain music written by Alexander Semmler, both published and unpublished, as well as some of his notes and correspondence.</td>
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</table>

Preferred Citation

Preferred citation for this material is as follows:

Identification of specific item, series, box, folder, Alexander Semmler Papers, 1914-1977. M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York (hereafter referred to as the Semmler Papers).

Biographical Sketch

Alexander Semmler was born in Dortmund, Germany, on 12 November 1900. He began composing music in adolescence and toured Europe and the United States as a pianist at the age of fifteen. He studied piano with Josef Pembaur and composition with Gustav Jenner, and later studied philosophy and musicology at the universities of Marburg, Berlin, and Munich. He emigrated to the United States as a young man and became an American citizen in 1930. Semmler worked as a pianist with the CBS Symphony and later as a staff conductor and composer at CBS, writing music both under his own name
and under the pseudonym Ralph Sandor (or Zandor). He served as the American administrator for the Rudfunk im Amerikanischen Sektor (RIAS) in Berlin from 1951 to 1952. He was later invited to Mexico, where he was instrumental in organizing the Centro de Compositores Mexicanos. From 1955 until 1970, he was the New York music director for TRF Music, Inc. and Picture Scores, Inc. During that same time, he served as program director of the Maverick Concerts in Woodstock, N. Y. Semmler died in Kingston, N. Y., on 24 April 1977.

The information provided above was gleaned from the following sources, in addition to those found in the Alexander Semmler Papers themselves:

Scope and Contents

The collection consists primarily of music written by Alexander Semmler, both in print and in manuscript. Among the compositions are symphonic works, chamber music, and works for various instruments, including piano and voice. There are also sketches for later compositions and notebooks with melodic ideas, both titled and untitled. The papers also include music written by Mr. Semmler under the pseudonym of Ralph Sandor (or Zandor), which is more commercially oriented than those pieces signed in his own name. Much of the music in the collection has never been published.

Also included in the papers are certain items kept with his musical compositions by Alexander Semmler; these miscellanea are noted in the individual series scope notes. Materials are arranged within series either by opus number or alphabetically, if no opus number is present (Series 5 is an exception—please see its scope note for details). Some of the items include emendations tipped in or fastened with tape. Many bear markings or annotations in a hand other than Alexander Semmler’s. These were not made by the processing archivist. When these markings included dates, those were included in the folder listing as approximate dates.

It should be noted that while there are multiple copies of most of the items in the Semmler Papers, these copies are often not identical, as many of the manuscripts have corrections or notations by the composer that vary from instance to instance. This is why the archivist elected to retain them. Due to the number of fragile and oversized items in the collection, materials pertaining to the same work may not be housed in the same physical location.

Arrangement of the Collection

The papers are arranged in seven series:
Materials arranged within series by opus number. Materials without an opus number arranged alphabetically by folder title.

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**Administrative Information**

**Publication Statement**

M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections & Archives

**Revision Description**

Encoded in EAD by Catherine Oliver 2011

**Processing Information**

Processed in 2011 by Catherine Oliver.

**Access**

Access to this record group is unrestricted.

**Copyright**

The researcher assumes full responsibility for conforming with the laws of copyright. Whenever possible, the M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives will provide information about copyright owners and other restrictions, but the legal determination ultimately rests with the researcher. Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be discussed with the Head of Special Collections and Archives.

**Performance Rights**

Performance of music from the Alexander Semmler Papers is by application only. If a performance is recorded or in some other manner documented, a copy must be provided to the Department of Special Collections and Archives. An invitation to all performances must be provided to Iliana Semmler or her designee.

**Acquisition Information**

This collection was donated by Dr. Iliana Semmler in January 2003.
Controlled Access Headings

- Music
- Composers--United States--20th century
- Symphonies
- Piano music
- Organ music
- Chamber music
- Vocal music
- Songs
- Incidental music
- Radio music
- Dance music
- Tangos
- Amateur films--Songs and music
- Jazz
- Woodstock (N. Y.)
- sheet music
- Semmler, Alexander, 1900-1977
- Pembaur, Josef, 1875-1950
- Jenner, Gustav, 1865-1920
- Brunetti-Pisano, August, 1870-1943
- Knab, Armin, 1881-1951
- Herrmann, Bernard, 1911-1975
- Lear, Edward, 1812-1888
- Machado, Antonio, 1812-1896
- Cowell, Henry, 1897-1965
- Burnet, Dana, 1888-1962
- Castaneda, Daniel Perez, 1901-1980
- Columbia Broadcasting System, Inc.
- Rundfunk im Amerikanischen Sektor (Berlin, Germany)

Collection Inventory

Symphonic Works, 1953

Date [inclusive]: 1953
Date [inclusive]: Undated

- Page 6-
Physical Description: 1.94 cubic ft.

**Arrangement**

Arranged by opus number.

**Scope and Contents**

This series consists of works written by Alexander Semmler for symphony orchestra. The Symphony No. 3, dedicated to RIAS-Berlin, is the longest of these; the title on the full orchestral score is in English, and the parts and corrections are in German, with musical notations in Italian. The other works are all in English, with musical notations in Italian.

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Works for Piano and Organ, 1941ca. 1956Undated

Date [inclusive]: 1941
Date [inclusive]: ca. 1956
Date [inclusive]: Undated

Physical Description: 1.16 cubic ft.

Arrangement

Arranged by opus number.

Scope and Contents

This series consists of works written by Alexander Semmler for solo piano and organ. Included in this series is a photocopied clipping of a newspaper review of a concert led by Semmler and featuring one of his works. It is housed with the item to which it was originally attached. All items are in English, with musical notations in Italian.

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<tr>
<td>Date [inclusive]: Undated</td>
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<td>Opus 32: Musical Notebook: For Nikky</td>
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^ Return to Table of Contents

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**Chamber Music, 1940-1977 Undated**

Date [inclusive]: 1940-1977

Date [inclusive]: Undated

Physical Description: 2.98 cubic ft.

Arrangement

Arranged by opus number.
**Scope and Contents**

This series consists of works written by Alexander Semmler for string or chamber orchestra and other chamber ensembles, both with and without piano accompaniment. Also included in this series is a program from a memorial concert given for Semmler, which was stored with the materials. Some items have attached descriptions of their genesis and performance history, possibly intended originally as program notes. These descriptions, all typewritten, may or may not be Semmler's work. Please note that the notations for the Opus 15 and the Opus 16 items are in German. This fact, coupled with the items' original housing in a RIAS folder, would suggest that they were created during Semmler's time with RIAS, although this is not a certainty.

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| Opus 4: Quintet for Wind Instruments (Woodwind Quintet)  
**Date [inclusive]:** Undated  
**Physical Description:** genreform: Onionskin manuscript parts | Oversized 6  
Folder 3 |
| Opus 8: Aria and Scherzo for Flute and String Orchestra  
**Date [inclusive]:** 1949  
**Physical Description:** genreform: Manuscript score | Box 2 (3-Chamber Music)  
Folder 10 |
| Opus 8: Aria and Scherzo for Flute and String Orchestra  
**Date [inclusive]:** Undated  
**Physical Description:** genreform: Manuscript flute part | Box 2 (3-Chamber Music)  
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| Opus 8: Aria and Scherzo for Flute and String Orchestra  
**Date [inclusive]:** Undated  
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Folder 4 |
| Opus 8: Aria and Scherzo for Flute and String Orchestra  
**Date [inclusive]:** Undated  
**Physical Description:** genreform: Manuscript string parts | Oversized 6  
Folder 5 |
| Opus 8: Aria and Scherzo for Flute and String Orchestra  
**Date [inclusive]:** Undated  
**Physical Description:** genreform: Onionskin manuscript score and parts | Oversized 6  
Folder 6 |
| Opus 8: Aria and Scherzo for Flute and String Orchestra  
**Date [inclusive]:** Undated  
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Folder 7 |
| Opus 10: String Quartet No. 1  
**Date [inclusive]:** Undated  
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Folder 12-13 |
| Opus 10: String Quartet No. 1  
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Folder 14-15 |
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| Folder 33 |

| Opus 28: Suite for Cello and Piano |
| Date [inclusive]: Undated |
| Physical Description: genreform: Onionskin manuscript score |
| Oversized 8 |
| Folder 7 |

| Opus 28: Suite for Cello and Piano |
| Date [inclusive]: Undated |
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| Oversized 8 |
| Folder 8 |

| Opus 33: Ode for Violin and Piano |
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| Folder 34 |

| Opus 33: Ode for Violin and Piano |
| Date [inclusive]: 1964 |
| Physical Description: genreform: Onionskin manuscript piano score and violin part |
| Oversized 8 |
| Folder 9 |

| Opus 33: Ode for Violin and Piano |
| Date [inclusive]: Undated |
| Physical Description: genreform: Manuscript violin part |
| Box 2 (3-Chamber Music) |
| Folder 35 |

| Opus 34: Rhapsody for Flute and Piano |
| Date [inclusive]: Undated |
| Physical Description: genreform: Manuscript piano score |
| Box 2 (3-Chamber Music) |
| Folder 36 |

| Opus 34: Rhapsody for Flute and Piano |
| Date [inclusive]: Undated |
| Physical Description: genreform: Manuscript flute part and typed program notes |
| Box 2 (3-Chamber Music) |
| Folder 37 |

| Opus 34: Rhapsody for Flute and Piano |
| Date [inclusive]: Undated |
| Physical Description: genreform: Onionskin manuscript piano score and flute part |
| Oversized 8 |
| Folder 10 |

Opus 35: Sonata for Clarinet or Viola and Piano
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- Page 19-
Physical Description: genreform: Onionskin manuscript full score and parts

Opus 45: Meditation and Capriccio for Flute and Piano (also arranged for Oboe or Clarinet and Piano)
  Date [inclusive]: Undated
  Physical Description: genreform: Manuscript flute part

Box 2 (3-Chamber Music)  Folder 54-55

Opus 45: Meditation and Capriccio for Flute and Piano (also arranged for Oboe or Clarinet and Piano)
  Date [inclusive]: Undated
  Physical Description: genreform: Manuscript clarinet part

Box 2 (3-Chamber Music)  Folder 56

Opus 47: Quintet for Bassoon and String Quartet
  Date [inclusive]: Undated
  Physical Description: genreform: Onionskin manuscript score and parts

Oversized 9  Folder 9

^ Return to Table of Contents

Instrumental Works without an Opus Number, 1916-1964

Date [inclusive]: 1916-1964
  Date [inclusive]: Undated
  Physical Description: 1.49 cubic ft.

Arrangement
  Arranged alphabetically by folder title.

Scope and Contents
  This series consists of those instrumental works written by Alexander Semmler under his own name that were never assigned an opus number by him. Included in this series is a collection of instrumental works that seems to date from Semmler's youth; this was entitled "Alexander Semmler: Early Instrumental Pieces" by the archivist. These materials are all in German, with Italian notations. Another work in this series is Semmler's "Entre dos Luces", for violin and string orchestra, which is in Spanish with Italian notations. All other materials in this series are in English with Italian notations. Also included in this series are the "Calendar Sketches," music written for sale to home-movie makers to accompany their films. The compositions are accompanied by a typescript describing the purpose of the music and suggesting uses for each piece. It is unclear whether this was written by Semmler.

Title/Description  Instances

| [Alexander Semmler: Early Instrumental Pieces]  Oversized 10  Folder 1 |
| Date [inclusive]: 1916 |
| Physical Description: genreform: Manuscript score |

<p>| Along the Sawkill  Oversized 10  Folder 2 |
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### Vocal and Choral Music, 1914-1968

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**Arrangement**

Arranged alphabetically by folder title.

**Scope and Contents**

This series consists of the vocal and choral works written by Alexander Semmler under his own name. The arrangement of this series is alphabetical except in the case of those works to which Semmler assigned opus numbers; they are arranged under 'O' in numerical order. Please note that the items in Oversized Folder 1 are all in German. All other items are in English, except for some song lyrics in Spanish. Where there is no notation to the contrary, both words and music are presumed to be by Semmler. In all other cases, the lyricist's name is listed first.

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<tr>
<td>Lullaby (H. Shotwell): Arranged for Solo and for Mixed Voices by A. Semmler</td>
<td>Oversized 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opus 24: Chamber Music (Divertimento) for Mixed Voices (Four Parts and Harp (or Piano))</td>
<td>Box 3 (5-Vocal and Choral Music)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opus 24: Chamber Music (Divertimento) for Mixed Voices (Four Parts and Harp (or Piano))</td>
<td>Oversized 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opus 30: [Seven Songs for Medium Voice]: La Desierta Plaza (Machado/Semmler); Renacimiento (Machado/Semmler)</td>
<td>Box 3 (5-Vocal and Choral Music)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opus 30: [Seven Songs for Medium Voice]: Respice (J. Shotwell/Semmler); Time is a Cunning Thief (J. Shotwell/Semmler); Viewpoint Cocktail; The Chicken (Morganstern/Semmler); Nightfall (S)</td>
<td>Oversized 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opus 30: [Seven Songs for Medium Voice]: Respice (J. Shotwell/Semmler); Time is a Cunning Thief (J. Shotwell/Semmler)</td>
<td>Box 3 (5-Vocal and Choral Music)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opus 30: [Seven Songs for Medium Voice]: Viewpoint Cocktail; The Chicken (Morganstern/Semmler)</td>
<td>Box 3 (5-Vocal and Choral Music)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Owl and the Pussy-Cat: For Chorus of Mixed Voices (SATB) with Piano Accompaniment (Leart/Semmler)</td>
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<td>Title</td>
<td>Date [inclusive]</td>
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<td>The Owl and the Pussy-Cat: For Chorus of Mixed Voices (SATB) with Piano Accompaniment (Lear/Semmler)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prelude and Hymn: A Voice-Instrumental for Mixed Chorus a capella</td>
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<td>Prelude and Hymn: A Voice-Instrumental for Mixed Chorus a capella</td>
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<td>Sinfonia Abstracta for Male Voices</td>
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<td>Sinfonia Abstracta for Male Voices</td>
<td>1968</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sing Along!</td>
<td>1958</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;There's a city by the river...&quot;</td>
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<td>Three Christmas Songs for Mixed Voices a capella (E. Semmler/ A. Semmler)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Three Christmas Songs for Mixed Voices a capella (E. Semmler/ A. Semmler)</td>
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<td>Vee Double U (Volkswagen Theme)</td>
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<td>Vee Double U (Volkswagen Theme)</td>
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Date [inclusive]: 1967
Physical Description: genreform: Onionskin manuscript score

"We are players all upon the stage of chance…"
Date [inclusive]: Undated
Physical Description: genreform: Manuscript score; pencil sketches on back

Music Written as Ralph Sandor, 1940-1950

Date [inclusive]: 1940-1950
Date [inclusive]: Undated
Physical Description: 0.2 cubic ft.

Arrangement
Arranged alphabetically by folder title.

Scope and Contents
This series includes music written by Alexander Semmler under the name Ralph Sandor (or Zandor). Much of it is more commercially oriented than his other works. This series includes both instrumental and vocal music. As with the vocal music written by Semmler under his own name, when there is a lyricist's name given, it is listed first.

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<tr>
<th>Title/Description</th>
<th>Instances</th>
<th>Folder</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entre dos Luces (Twilight): Tango</td>
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<tr>
<td>Incidental Music: Piano or Organ</td>
<td>Box 3 (6-Music Written as Ralph Sandor)</td>
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<td>Folder 53-54</td>
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<td>Box 3 (6-Music Written as Ralph Sandor)</td>
<td>Folder 55</td>
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<tr>
<td>Light Orchestral Music</td>
<td>Undated</td>
<td>Manuscript woodwind parts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Light Orchestral Music</td>
<td>Undated</td>
<td>Manuscript brass parts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Light Orchestral Music</td>
<td>Undated</td>
<td>Manuscript percussion parts</td>
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<td>Light Orchestral Music</td>
<td>Undated</td>
<td>Manuscript harp part</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop Music</td>
<td>Undated</td>
<td>Manuscript scores and sketches for instrumental and vocal works (lyrics for vocal works by Sandor and by Alice Blackburn)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tangos by Sandor</td>
<td>Undated</td>
<td>Manuscript score</td>
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<td>[Three Pieces by Ralph Sandor: &quot;Oh You Gypsy!&quot; (Blackburn/Sandor); Maracaibo; &quot;Out of the Gray&quot; (Ball/Sandor)]</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Manuscript score; printed score</td>
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<tr>
<td>[Violin and Piano Music]</td>
<td>1941</td>
<td>Manuscript score</td>
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^ Return to Table of Contents
Date [inclusive]: 1919-1954
Date [inclusive]: Undated

Physical Description: 3.63 cubic ft.

Arrangement

Arranged in two subseries, the first consisting of manuscript sketches and the second of notebooks. The sketches are arranged alphabetically by folder title; the notebooks are arranged first alphabetically by title and then chronologically. When a folder bore more than one title, the archivist chose the spine title to represent the whole, with any other titles given after a semicolon. Titles that Semmler crossed out were not included in the folder title. Photocopies of Semmler's original folders were included in each folder. Included in this series is "Queen Mystery Cue #12", a piece by Bernard Herrmann originally written for the CBS radio drama "Ellery Queen."

Scope and Contents

This series includes manuscript sketches and notebooks.

Sketches, 1919-1954 Undated

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<tr>
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<td>Bassoon Quintet (Sketches); [Instrumental and Vocal Sketches]</td>
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<td>Date [inclusive]: 1943-1944</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chamber Music: Mixed Voices and Harp or Piano (Opus 24);</td>
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<td>Lullaby; [Sketches]</td>
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<td>Date [inclusive]: Undated</td>
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<td>Physical Description: genreform: Manuscript sketches</td>
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<td>Complete Pieces</td>
<td>Oversized 13 Folder 3</td>
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<td>Concertino for Piano and Orchestra (Sketches); [Radio Cues]</td>
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<td>Don Quixote</td>
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<td>Cue Sketches: CBS Recording, Dec 47</td>
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<tr>
<td>[Early Instrumental and Vocal Sketches; Dance Music Sketches]</td>
<td>1919, 1921, 1927</td>
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<td>Farmer in the Dell: A Caprice for Piano and String Orchestra</td>
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<td>For the Sound-track</td>
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<td>Foundation Play (Wood/Semmler)</td>
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<td>Light Industrials (Harry Glass Recording 59); [Indian Rhapsody]</td>
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<td>Manhattan Diary, Orchestra Sketches</td>
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<td>Miscellaneous Commercial Pieces (Material)</td>
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<td>Mood Sketches</td>
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<td>[My Country [,] 'Tis America (Ralph Sandor); Twelve Tone Rows and Untitled Sketches]</td>
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<td>Odes to Darkness; Current Sketches</td>
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<td>Sketches in Progress; H. C. Quartet</td>
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<td>Commercial Sketches]</td>
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<td>Theme and Variations: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra</td>
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<td>Theme and Variations for Orchestra; [Vocal Music]</td>
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<td>[&quot;To Charly;&quot; On the High Seas; Pixies]</td>
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**Physical Description:** genreform: Manuscript sketches

[Vocal Sketches and Notes]

**Date [inclusive]:** Undated

**Physical Description:** genreform: Manuscript sketches

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### Notebooks, 1937-1950 Underated

**Date [inclusive]:** 1937-1950

**Date [inclusive]:** Undated

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<td>Loose sketches, notes, and miscellanea</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Date [inclusive]:</strong> Undated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classical Themes; Yankee Doodle [et al.]</td>
<td>Box 4 (7-Sketches and Notebooks) Folder 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Duet Cl. And Fl. [et al.]; Piano Prelude [et al.]</td>
<td>Box 4 (7-Sketches and Notebooks) Folder 3</td>
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<td>Madrigals; Original Themes</td>
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^ Return to Table of Contents